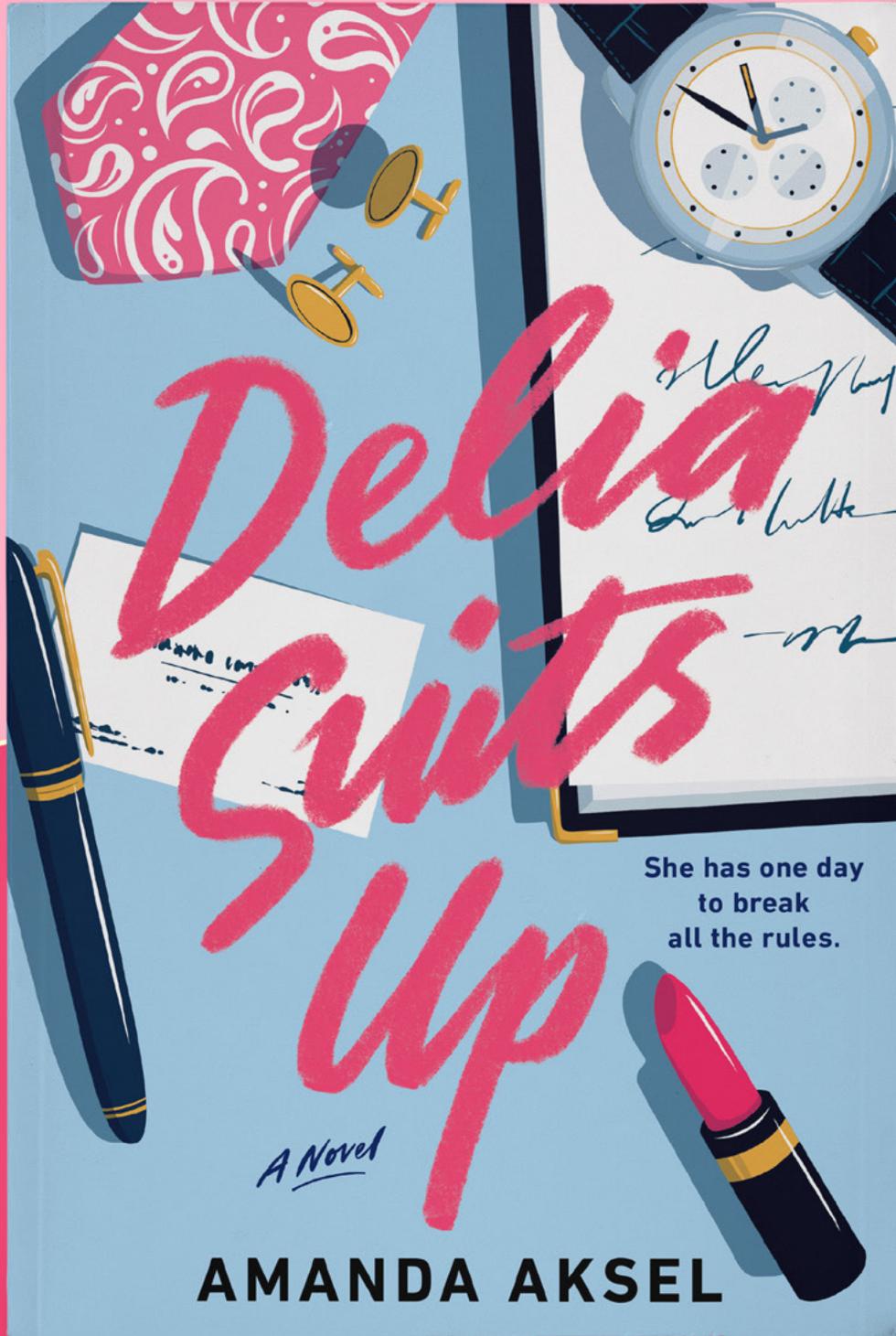


Book Club Kit





a conversation
with
Amanda Akxel

Tell us about *Delia Suits Up*. What inspired you to write this story?

The idea for *Delia Suits Up* was born in the fall of 2014 after talking with a couple of authors about what it would be like to be the opposite sex for a day, and they encouraged me to write it. I wanted to explore the idea of taking on a new form and how that might inform the way the world sees us and, more importantly, how we see ourselves. As a woman working in a male-dominated industry at that time, I figured sexism in the workplace would make an interesting catalyst.

Delia truly believed it was her womanhood getting in the way of her success—a sentiment shared by many. It's not uncommon for people to struggle with some missing link in their lives that they believe prevents them from living the life of their dreams—be it physical or circumstantial (I know I do). By granting her wish to wake up in a man's body, I wanted to demonstrate the old adage—the grass isn't always greener on the other side. Ultimately, I wanted to show that Delia's success was ready. It was just waiting for her to dig deep and believe in herself.

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for people to struggle with some missing link in their lives that they believe prevents them from living the life of their dreams—be it physical or circumstantial.

How did your background as a woman in the financial industry influence this story?

When I started my career in the financial industry, it became obvious that there was only a small percentage of women in the business compared to men. Not only that, on the corporate side, women were paid less than men for the same jobs. A female colleague shared with me, “In this business, being a woman will get you in the door, but you’ll have to work harder to stay there.” So I started to pay more attention to how men and women were treated differently.

As for the actual job, I worked with individuals as a financial adviser with an emphasis on retirement planning, which is very different from Delia’s investment banking world on Wall Street. But I was able to incorporate my first-hand experience of the competitive nature that these businesses share.

Tell us a bit about your main character, Delia. How did you go about bringing her to life?

I tend to let characters reveal themselves in the story as I’m writing it. I knew her weakness, an inferiority complex, and her strength, determination and intelligence. Everything else about her was hidden in the lines as I typed away. With every draft, I learned more about her. She’s a bit socially awkward, especially with her crush. She’s a loyal friend who attracts people who love to have a good time and are as ambitious as she is.

The only thing I may unintentionally impose on my characters throughout my books is their love of music, because songs are like oxygen to me. Delia is a big Beyoncé fan who loves to dance her stress away. Beyoncé was a great choice for her because she’s an aspirational figure—a strong, talented woman who calls the shots in her own career. Delia is very real to me, especially because I’ve spent so much time with her. It probably sounds cheesy, but when Berkley

bought the book, I totally imagined Delia giving me a congratulatory hug. I've never "interacted" with a character like that before. I hope she'll be as memorable to readers.

***Delia Suits Up* features a magical "what-if" scenario found in many fan-favorite early 2000s movies like *Freaky Friday* and *13 Going on 30*. Did you take inspiration from any movies or TV shows while writing the book, and if so, which ones?**

I LOVE movies like *13 Going on 30*, *Big*, and *Wish Upon a Star* because they give the characters a glimpse of a different version of their life. This trope absolutely inspired the book! I'm a big fan of TV and film and strive to write in a very cinematic way since I started writing screenplays before venturing into novels. Definitely shows about ambitious women in New York City were influences, particularly for the scenery—*Sex and the City*, *Cashmere Mafia*, and *Lipstick Jungle*. I was really inspired by the way *Big* set up the catalyst with the eerie music and wind at the Zoltar machine. I'm sure some of my favorite popular transformation movies from childhood like *Can't Buy Me Love* and *Teen Witch* stuck with me too.

***Delia Suits Up* takes place in one whirlwind of a day. How did you figure out plotting each scene to fit in such a short time span?**

I can't imagine this story taking place over a longer period of time. Using a short time frame has the added benefit of maintaining the momentum. It's such a drastic concept that I knew readers would want to see every second of it, and because of that there are very few lapses in time.

When writing a story, an author should only show the good/interesting parts. My books are no longer than they need to be because I don't want readers to skim a single sentence. Plotting the scenes was no different than a novel that takes place over a few weeks or months. I knew how she would move throughout her day and I simply had to ask myself, as most authors do, how do I build tension in this beat and make it interesting? For most of Delia's journey, I asked myself, what's the worst thing that could happen to her right now, and then write that. Sorry, Delia!

What do you want readers to take away from this novel?

It's my hope to leave readers inspired to take bold action in the direction of their dreams while embracing their true selves with love and compassion. In *Delia Suits Up*, Delia learns to believe in the power of her own life and I hope readers will be encouraged to do the same.

Extras!

Since Delia and her roommates, Regina and Frankie, often find themselves broke, they like to indulge in drinking cheap wine on their living room floor. I personally feel that a glass of wine pairs perfectly with friends, with a good book, or with good friends gushing over a book.

Here are my favorite wines for \$10 or less:

Click the
wines to
learn more

Blue Fin Pinot Noir

Apothic Red Blend

Nobilo Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc

Chateau Ste. Michelle Reisling

Beringer Main & Vine Pinot Grigio

In the book, Delia references her “Feel Good” playlist in chapter two while heading across town. She loves anything that makes her want to shake her booty, especially Beyoncé.

Scan the code below and get down to Delia’s fave tunes on Spotify:



Discussion Questions

1. What aspects of Delia's story could you most relate to?
2. After reading Delia's story, do you feel she experienced discrimination in the workplace or was it more about confidence or lack thereof?
3. Which scene stuck with you the most and why?
4. Delia has a really strong support network with her roommates. How do you think your friends would have reacted if you were in Delia's situation? How would you try to convince them that it is you?
5. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be someone else for a day? How would you spend your day?
6. Delia's new body allows her to manifest her confidence. What helps you embody confidence? Or what circumstances do you think would help you bring out more confidence?
7. Delia takes some big risks in this book. What would you be willing to risk for your dream life?
8. What ideas do you think the author is trying to get across in this book?